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Beth L. King
bethlking@yahoo.com

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GONERIL: JEALOUSY AND THIRST FOR POWER

CAUSED BY THE LOSS OF A FATHER'S LOVE

by

Beth Leona King

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Theater Arts

Under the supervision of Professor Harris Smith

Lincoln, Nebraska

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GONERIL: JEALOUSY AND THIRST FOR POWER
CAUSED BY THE LOSS OF A FATHER'S LOVE

Beth Leona King, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2010

Advisor: Harris Smith

The challenge for every actor is to bring something of yourself to a role. The more real it can become for you the more real it will be for the audience. Goneril is a caricature. She is rich, powerful and she does horrible things like throwing her father out into the cold, having an affair, poisoning her sister and ultimately killing herself. She is one of Shakespeare's "evil" women. I have to say I do not consider myself evil. So what could I have in common with this monster of a woman? One of our fellow classmates died while we were working on this play. His name is Jason Francis. He always said to look for the love in a scene or character. That advice is what helped me to understand Goneril the woman.

There are two people that Goneril loves in this play, her father King Lear, and herself. Goneril is insanely jealous of Lear's affection toward her younger sister Cordelia. I believe that Goneril was Lear's favorite child until Cordelia was born, after all Goneril was the first royal child born into the family. Now Lear dotes on Cordelia and has no interest in Goneril. This affects how Goneril deals with her husband, her lover and all of the men in her life. She does not trust men and believes she can only count on herself. Lear is not a good father to Goneril but it is her choice to seek revenge that finally causes her downfall.

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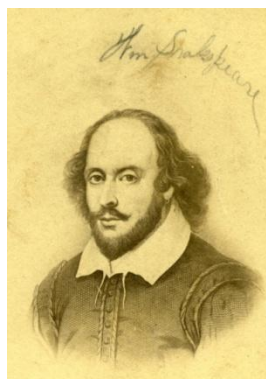
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Beth King

MFA Graduate Thesis

King Lear – Goneril - Shakespeare

Research Narrative Area 1



- Research on the playwright, the play's structure, the playwright's other plays, the playwright's major objectives, and how the playwright addresses those objectives.

Writing about William Shakespeare is somewhat like writing about God. His work is so extraordinary, no one can really match him, and his catalog of writing is so vast that it is overwhelming to try taking it all in at once. Scholars even give reverence to his work and shun anyone that would dare to alter his words. He is not only an English icon but his works have been translated into other languages and performed world-wide. So writing intelligently and graciously about such a force is no small task. In preparing to write this document I have read differing theories and ideas about Shakespeare the man and the writer. Many question his ability to write so many plays, others question his personal relationships. Some areas of his life are not very well documented so finding concrete answers has been difficult. I will share facts relevant to King Lear and the character I will portray, Goneril. This document is intended to highlight the actor's process in preparing for a role, including research, analysis and personal discovery.

William Shakespeare was born on April 26, 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon and died on April 23, 1616. He lived most of his young life in Stratford and returned numerous times during his life. The rural surroundings no doubt influenced his plays and sonnets.

“The Stratford of Shakespeare’s day was a ‘handsome small market town’ (as described by William Camden) of perhaps 1,500 inhabitants, with fairly broad streets and half-timbered houses roofed with thatch. It could boast of a long history and an attractive setting on the river Avon. It was a town without the domination of clergy, aristocracy, or great wealth. It lay in a rich agricultural region, in the county of Warwickshire. To the north of Stratford lay the Forest of Arden.”¹



Stratford-upon-Avon

William was the son of John Shakespeare , a tanner and a glover, who owned some property and acquired more by marrying Mary Arden, the daughter of his father’s landlord. John rose to great local importance in Stratford and bought several houses one of which was the house on Henley Street traditionally identified as Shakespeare’s birthplace. He was baptized on April

¹ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lii

26, 1564, and although the exact date of his birth is not known it is usually celebrated on April 23, the feast day of St. George. He was the third child of eight and the eldest surviving son.

William is thought to have attended the King's New School at Stratford-upon-Avon. The records of the students that attended the school during the late sixteenth century have not survived. But Shakespeare's father was a leading member of the community and would have wanted William to attend this prized institution.



The King's New School



If he attended The King's New School, he would have studied classics in Latin and Greek. This might explain his references to classic authors in his plays: Plautus in *The Comedy of Errors*, Ovid in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Seneca in *Titus Andronicus*.² While his references are not always accurate, they suggest that he had a general knowledge of the literature.

At the age of eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway on November 27, 1582. She was eight years older than he and apparently pregnant because their first child Susanna was born six months later on May 26, 1583. The fact that she was so much older and that she was pregnant at the time of the marriage has given way to much speculation, none of which can be substantiated. Shakespeare dramatized the issue of premarital contract and pregnancy in *Measure for Measure* but there is no way to know if he was making a comment on his own

² The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lv

circumstances. On February 2, 1585, his only other children, the twins Hamnet and Judith were baptized in Stratford. The twins were named after Shakespeare's friends and neighbors, Hamnet Sadler, a baker, and his wife Judith.³

“The bishop's register of Worcester, the central city of diocese, shows for November 27, 1582 the issue of a bishop's license for the marriage of William Shakespeare and Anne 'Whately'; the bond of sureties issued the next day refers to her as 'Hathaway' she has been identified with all reasonable probability as Agnes or Anne Hathaway, daughter of the then recently deceased Richard Hathaway of the hamlet of Shottery, a short distance away from Stratford.”⁴



Anne Hathaway

From 1585 to 1592, approximately seven years, little is known of the life of Shakespeare. Presumably during this time he moved to London and entered the theatrical profession but scholars seem to know little about what he did from ages 21 to 28. The first reference to Shakespeare after his Stratford days occurs in an attack on him in Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*, written by Robert Greene during the last months of his life. Greene lashed out at actors of the public theaters for deserting him and bestowing their favor on certain upstart dramatists.

“Base minded men all three of you, if by my misery you be not warned. For unto none of you (like me) sought those burs to cleave-those puppets, I mean, that spake from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colors. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding, is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were ye in that case as I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not. For there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and, being and

³ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lvi

⁴ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lv

absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.”⁵

The three men referred to Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe, and George Peele, fellow dramatists of the time. The “burs” are the actors who have forsaken Greene for the rival playwright Shakespeare. The reference to “Johnnes Factotum “takes a dig at Shakespeare for being a Jack-of-all-trades, actor, playwright, poet, director and producer. The most obvious reference to Shakespeare is in the line “Tiger’s heart wrapped in a player’s hide” referencing “O tiger’s heart wrapped in a woman’s hide!” from *Henry IV* (1.4.137). Shakespeare had apparently found success as a dramatist and it led to an envious outburst by the older rival.

At the end of 1594 the theaters were again opened after being closed down by the plague. At this time Shakespeare is a member of the Lord Chamberlain’s company. He had already written *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the *Henry VI* plays and *Titus and Andronicus*. Some scholars do question whether Shakespeare wrote *Titus* and the *Henry VI* plays but no one questions that the plays come from this period in history.

Shakespeare was influenced during this time by the plays already on the London stage, written by Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd and George Peele. These included: Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, featuring a villain as the hero, Robert Greene’s *Orlando Furioso*, a romantic comedy masquerading as a heroic play, Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, a popular satiric comedy aimed at dissolute courtiers and usurers, and George Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar*, a history play about Portugal’s African empire.⁶

⁵ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lvii

⁶ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lviii

Not many records exist for the Lord Chamberlain's company; however, Philip Henslowe the part owner of The Rose Theater kept an extensive diary of the workings of the Lord Admiral's Men, a rival theater company. Because of the information in this diary it is known that both companies were performing the same types of plays and therefore assumptions can be made about Shakespeare's early influences as a playwright.

Shakespeare's first tragedy *Titus Andronicus* (c. 1589 -1592) is differs from his later tragedies. It is modeled after a revenge play and has a considerable amount of violence which is not consistent with most classical plays. There is also a strong influence of Ovidian narrative poetry that does not exist in his later plays. *Romeo and Juliet* (c. 1594-1596), his only other early tragedy, had revenge as a theme but it was much more focused on the fleetingness of love, and the sacrifice the two lovers make at the end of the play. While these plays laid the groundwork for later tragedies they do not have the same refined artistry present in *Macbeth* or *King Lear*.⁷

Shakespeare found success more quickly as a playwright with comedy although he did experiment with many models and genres. His early comedies, *The Comedy of Errors* (c. 1589-1594), *Love's Labor's Lost* (c. 1588-1597), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (c. 1590-1594), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (c. 1590-1593) were humorous with confusing mishaps and the war of the sexes. They are fun crowd pleasing comedies that if performed well can still be considered humorous today. They differ from his later comedies by the lack of mortal danger and intense dramatic situations within the story.

⁷ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lix

His early histories show strong influence from Marlowe, Peele and Greene although most scholars recognize that Shakespeare took his plays well beyond his predecessors. He had an early success with the heroic character of Lord Talbot in *Henry VI* and when Richard Duke of Gloucester emerged from Henry VI to become King Richard III, Shakespeare was forever immortalized as a dramatist.

Although most well known for his plays, Shakespeare had created a rising reputation as a poet. His sonnets *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* were widely circulated and respected among writers of the day. Many of Shakespeare's later works are compared to great works of poetry as a testament to his mastery of the written word.

In 1595 Shakespeare's name appears for the first time in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Royal Chamber as a member of the Chamberlain's company of players. This company usually performed at the Theatre, northeast of London, until 1599 when they moved to the Globe Theater south of Thames. There seemed to be an intense rivalry between the Lord Chamberlain's players and the Lord Admiral's company that performed at the Rose under Philip Henslowe's management. During most of the 1590's the boy's private theatrical companies were shut down which allowed Shakespeare's company to enjoy great success. In the contest between the two companies Shakespeare's company appears to have come out on top.

"First among the actors in Shakespeare's company was Richard Burbage (1567-1619). He played Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and presumably other major roles including Macbeth, Antony, Coriolanus and Prospero."⁸



Richard Burbage

⁸ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lxxv

The main players in the Lord Chamberlain's company were the Burbages: James Burbage was the father and owner of the Theater, Cuthbert Burbage was a manager and Richard Burbage was the principle actor of the group. The Burbages owned five shares in the company which entitled them to half of the profits. Shakespeare and four other actors, John Heminges, Thomas Pope, Augustine Phillips, and Will Kempe, owned one share each. He was much more celebrated as a playwright than an actor but there are reports that he specialized in playing older characters such as Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*.⁹ Shakespeare owned a share in the company in which he was an actor and a playwright this enabled him to gain wealth and prestige as the company continued to succeed.

The first record of his prosperity appears in his residence in London for 1596. It showed that Shakespeare was a resident in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopgate, near the Theatre, and was assessed taxes in the sum of five pounds, a very respectable amount. He also acquired property in Stratford during these years and in 1597 he purchased New Place, an important home and one of the two largest in town. Shakespeare's family lived in the house until long after his death.

A sign of Shakespeare's rise in the world is his acquisition of the right to bear arms, in other words his attempt to earn the title and rank of gentleman. In 1596 Shakespeare suffered a terrible loss, his son Hamnet died at the age of eleven and was buried in Stratford in August of that same year. The death of his only son, the aging of his father and Shakespeare's apparent influx of money were all contributing factors to his acquisition of a coat of arms.

⁹ Shakespeare and the Middle Ages, Edited by Curtis Perry and John Watkins, page 101

The Herald's College in London preserves two drafts of a grant of arms to Shakespeare's father, written by William Dethick and dated October 20, 1596. The grant was drawn up in his father's name probably because his father had applied twenty years before and was turned down. The grant of heraldic honors to John Shakespeare was finally confirmed in 1599.



Shakespeare's coat of arms

"Gold on a bend sables, a spear of the first steeled argent. And for his crest of cognizance a falcon, his wings displayed argent, standing on the wreath of his colors, supporting a spear, gold steeled as aforesaid, set upon a helmet with mantles and tassels, as hath been accustomed and doth more plainly appear depicted in this margent."¹⁰



Shakespeare's application for coat of arms

The Globe was built in 1599. One half of the interest in the property was assigned to the Burbage family, and the other half was divided among five actors: Shakespeare, Will Kempe, Thomas Pope, Augustine Phillips, and John Heminges. Unfortunately for the Globe, the boys acting companies reopened in 1599 and serious rivalry grew between the adult and the boys companies. The boy's theater capitalized on the new vogue of satire, usually directed at the city of London and its bourgeois inhabitants. The price of admission at these private theaters was

¹⁰ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lxvi

considerably higher than that of the Globe or the Rose and so the clientele tended to be more sophisticated. But in 1603 Queen Elizabeth died, and King James I ascended to the throne.

“According to a document of instruction from King James to his Keeper of the Privy Seal, dated May 19, 1603, and endorsed as ‘The Players Privilege,’ the acting company that had formerly been the Lord Chamberlain’s Men now became the King’s company. The document names Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillips, John Heminges, Henry Condell, Will Sly, Robert Armin, Richard Crowley, and Lawrence Fletcher. These players are accorded the usual privileges of exercising their art anywhere within the kingdom and are henceforth to be known as the King’s company.”¹¹

This was a major achievement for the company and added with it the rank of Grooms of the Royal Chamber, awarding them grants of red cloth so that they dressed in the royal livery. They also signed a twenty year lease in the summer of 1608 for the use of the Blackfriars playhouse, an indoor, intimate, artificially lighted theater inside the city of London.

Several of Shakespeare’s plays were acted at the Globe and the Blackfriars. The plays he wrote after 1608: *Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Tempest* all show influence of the dramaturgy of the private theaters. Also an increasing number of his plays were being performed at court: *Othello*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest* are documented in court accounts and *Macbeth* flatters the Scottish royal heritage of King James himself.

Shakespeare’s latest plays are often called “tragicomedies” or “romances” which suggested a return to the kind of story seen in Greek romance: tales of adventure, long separations, and tearful reunions, shipwrecks, capture by pirates, riddling prophecies, children set

¹¹ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lxix

adrift in boats or abandon on foreign shores and so on. Plays that fall into the category are *Cymbeline*, *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*.

Sometime in 1612 Shakespeare retired to Stratford and his role in London theater slowly diminished. In January of 1615 or 1616, Shakespeare drew up his last will and testament with the assistance of his lawyer Francis Collins. The cause of death on April 23 is not known although it was reported that he was in failing health. An interesting hypothesis comes from John Ward, vicar of Holy Trinity in Stratford; he writes in his diary that Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Johnson had a merry meeting and drank too much for Shakespeare died of a fever thereafter. However the entry is fifty years after Shakespeare's death and is not able to be verified.¹²

The Anti-Stratfordian Movement is a movement in the last hundred years that expresses doubt that Shakespeare wrote the plays and poems credited to him. This phenomenon is often called anti-Stratfordian because it attacks the education level of a man born in Stratford and later who becomes an actor in London. Could a man with only a very general education write so eloquently? How could he write so many different types, and styles so effortlessly not to mention the sheer volume of literature? It is based on no real evidence and has become a sort of myth that has the appeal of a mystery. Who really did write the plays? It is an interesting thing to ponder and we are no closer to knowing the answer. It is worth mentioning however that there seems to be some speculation about the origin of the work.

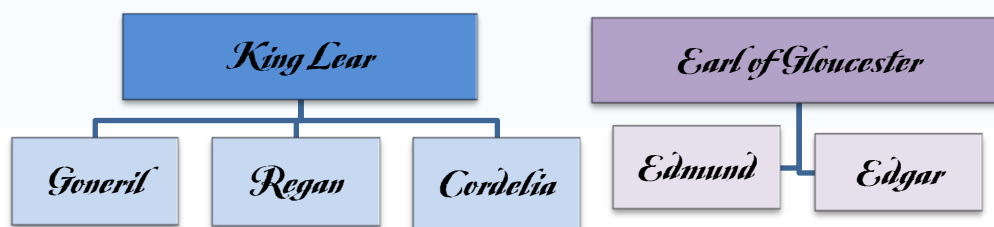
¹² The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page lxxvi

- Research on the play's dates of composition, its setting in history, and the social, political, cultural, economic, and spiritual values contained within it.

King Lear was possibly written 1603 – 1604, when Shakespeare was at the height of writing tragedies. The first performance of the play was at court in December of 1606.¹³ The first folio of Shakespeare's work was printed in 1623 and the plays were not printed in chronological order. Scholars have had to estimate the dates of composition for the plays based on other printed materials from the time. Two versions of *King Lear* were found in the earliest printing and sections from both have been used to create the modern variations that exist today.

The story of *King Lear* existed previous to Shakespeare writing his play; however all of the earlier versions ended happily. The earliest known version of the story, *Historia Regum Britanniae* by Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1136), has Lear being overthrown by his sons-in-law more than by his daughters and restored to the throne with the help of the French King.¹⁴ At the end of the play he lives out his life in peace with his daughter Cordelia by his side. The tragic ending was likely an idea taken from the Gloucester, Edgar, and Edmund subplot based on Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, in which the king is the victim of ingratitude and deceit.¹⁵

Shakespeare's *King Lear* is the story of two families, King Lear and his daughters and, the Earl of Gloucester and his sons.



¹³ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page 1167

¹⁴ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page 1167

¹⁵ Shakespeare and the Middle Ages, edited by Curtis Perry and John Watkins, page 89

The King has three daughters Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. Lear's favorite daughter is Cordelia but he makes a grave error at the beginning of the play interpreting her modesty for disobedience and disinherits her. His older daughters Goneril and Regan are spoiled and mean, they have always been jealous of the favor Lear showed Cordelia. The older sisters want Lear's money and power but do not want to look after him in his old age.

The Earl of Gloucester has two sons Edgar and Edmund. Edgar is his legitimate son and will inherit all of his wealth and power, Edmund is a bastard son born from another woman and has no claim to the family fortune. Edmund tired of being the forgotten son decides to convince Gloucester that Edgar is plotting against him in an attempt to get him to disinherit Edgar and leave the estate to Edmund instead.

Many themes are present in the play but a very large one is morality, especially with the "evil" characters. How moral is it to receive a kingdom and wealth from a father as Goneril and Regan do and then turn him out into the cold because he is no longer wanted. Edmund tricks his father into believing Edgar, a good and decent man, is plotting against him causing Edgar to be thrust out into the cold as well. At the heart of this play are two families. It is even more tragic that these characters are related and still treating each other so horrendously.

Money, power and greed play a huge role in this play. These things are what drive the "evil" characters Goneril, Regan, Cornwall (Regan's husband) and Edmund. It is not enough for Goneril that her father has left her a large portion of land and wealth, she wants more, she wants Lear gone and to act as queen over the land including her sister Regan. Edmund also wants more; he plots to gain his father's fortune but also woos Goneril and Regan hoping to gain even more wealth and power.

Why are these characters so angry, selfish and mean? Goneril and Regan have always felt that Lear loved Cordelia the most. Perhaps they felt underappreciated or unloved which caused them to turn sour. It does not condone their actions but may give some insight into why they turn away their father. Maybe they felt that he did not love and care for them when they were younger so why should they care for him now in his old age. Edmund is always referred to as the bastard son. A label like that could do horrible things to a person. The word bastard carries very negative connotations such as: illegitimate, sinful, dirty, and low ranking. Living with a stigma like this would over time start to wear on a persons psyche. Edmund may have felt the only way to heal the pain he had continually felt all his life was to cause his father horrible pain.

Lear and Gloucester have spiritual awakenings during the play. Lear is old and wants to be flattered and taken care of by his daughters. In overreacting to Cordelia's not showing him adequate appreciation he seals his own doom by sending her away. He is then eventually left out in the storm to fend for himself and only then does he begin to realize the error of his ways. Gloucester is taken in by Edmund's scheme and banishes his good and loyal son Edgar. But only after Gloucester's eyes have been gouged out does he truly begin to see. Both of these men have to endure horrible trials in order to change, learn and see the painful truth.

- Research on the date and location of the play's premiere performance, the cast members of the premiere performance, critical reaction to the play, and summation of the play's performance history.

The first recorded performance of *King Lear* was December 26, 1606, for the royal court. Richard Burbage very likely played Lear, Robert Armin the Fool with the rest of the company of players John Heminges, Henry Condell, William Sly and Richard Cowley filling out the cast.

The play encountered much criticism when first performed especially because it was based on the legend of Leir of Britain a mythological pre-Roman Celtic king. The story had been passed down for ages and usually had a happy ending with Leir being restored to the throne. Audiences were not prepared for the much darker version of the already celebrated story.



King Lear and Cordelia

“One of Shakespeare’s editors, Dr. Samuel Johnson, evidently spoke for most eighteenth-century audiences when he confessed that he could not bring himself to read Shakespeare’s text. Cordelia’s slaughter violated that age’s longing for ‘poetic justice.’ Her death implied a wanton universe and so counseled philosophic despair.”¹⁶



King Lear and Cordelia

Audiences still craved the *Lear* with a happy ending and in 1681 Nahum Tate wrote an adaption that united Edgar and Cordelia in marriage and restored Lear to the throne. This version of the play ran on the English stage for almost 150 years. It was not until 1838 that the play was again performed with the tragic ending and most of the original text by Shakespeare.

Since that time *King Lear* has become known as one of Shakespeare’s best and most celebrated plays. The most famous staging may be the 1962 production directed by Peter Brook,

¹⁶ The Complete Works of Shakespeare, updated fourth edition, David Bevington page 1167

with Paul Scofield as Lear, and Alec McCowen as The Fool. In a 2004 opinion poll of members of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Scofield's Lear was voted as the greatest performance in a Shakespearean play in the history of the RSC.



Paul Scofield as King Lear

Notable performers as King Lear

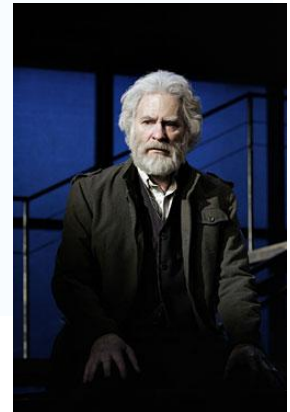
- Brian Bedford
- Richard Briers, with Emma Thompson as his fool
- Richard Burbage
- Lee J. Cobb
- Brian Cox
- Yehia El-Fakharany in an Arabic translation of the play.
- Michael Gambon, with Antony Sher as his fool
- John Gielgud
- Hal Holbrook
- Ian Holm
- Anthony Hopkins
- Michael Hordern in two separate television productions
- William Hutt
- James Earl Jones
- Stacey Keach
- Kevin Kline
- Ian McKellen, with Romola Garai as Cordelia, Frances Barber as Goneril, and Monica Dolan as Regan
- Tatsuya Nakadai in Akira Kurosawa's *Ran*
- Laurence Olivier, with Alec Guinness as the Fool in one production, and John Hurt in a televised production
- Samuel Phelps
- Christopher Plummer
- Pete Postlethwaite
- Paul Scofield
- Robert Stephens
- Orson Welles
- Donald Wolfitt
- Alfredo Alcón¹⁷



Sir Ian McKellen as King Lear



James Earl Jones as King Lear



Kevin Kline as King Lear

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Lear

- An analysis of the character which the candidate shall be playing, including the characters objectives, motivations, the stimuli to which the character responds, the impulses that drive the character through the play, and the rationale behind the character's actions.

I will be portraying Goneril in Shakespeare's King Lear. Just the name Goneril, which seems eerily close to the word Gonorrhea, gives a clue that this is not a very nice character. Her name is no accident; I think Shakespeare intended her to be like a disease full of venom and very dangerous. She is the oldest daughter of Lear and therefore should inherit the most from him but Lear intends to leave Cordelia a larger portion of wealth and land. The King changes his mind when Cordelia does not play his game and flatter him. Goneril and Regan then inherit the land and wealth. Goneril has an ere of entitlement she thinks she should be queen of all the land and no matter how much power and money she gets it never seems to be enough to quench her thirst. She is very jealous that her father loves her sister Cordelia more and perhaps feels wronged because her father did not show her the love and affection she wanted. This may explain why later in the play she tries to get her father to go and live with her sister. Goneril is full of jealousy, lust, greed and a thirst for power. The coin cannot only have one side; there must be reasons why she is that way, a human side to a very monstrous woman.

I am a very visual person. I like to find pictures that express emotions, feelings and characters. These are some pictures that I initially picked out relating my portrayal of Goneril.



Royalty



Angry



Crafty

**Lethal****Monstrous****Powerful**

But as I worked on the role I noticed that my feelings about the character changed. In talking with the director we wanted to portray Goneril as a real person. So I tried to find the human side of the character. What does she want? These are some of the next images that came to my mind.

**Duty****Pain****Desire**

Unfortunately I realized that my own connection with my father is similar in some ways to Goneril's relationship with King Lear. Lear and my father both are powerful men; they keep everyone at an arms distance, and sometimes can be unintentionally cruel. Once I realized the similarities it made my job as an actress easier. I began to see the desire for her father's approval and the constant reminders that he loved Cordelia the most. Goneril's feelings for her father affect the way she deals with all of the men in her life. She is desperate for her father's love, dangerously jealous of Cordelia and decides to use men the way she feels they have used her.

<i>Lines</i>	<i>Subtext</i>	<i>Objective</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter, Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty, Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare, No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor; As much as child e'er loved, or father found; A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable. Beyond all manner of so much I love you. Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence tonight. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath (not) been little. He always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash. Then must we look from his age to receive the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them. Pray you, let us sit together. If our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us. We must do something, and i' th' heat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I must do my courtly duty and tell my father what he wants to hear. I need to lay it on thick to make it convincing. I am astonished at what just happened, but what a great turn of events for us. He is not himself right now and we can capitalize on it. I hate my precious pathetic sister Cordelia; I am thrilled that he has cast her aside. Father has always been too emotional. But as he grows older we may have to take care of an invalid and that does not appeal to me. Maybe if we work together we can get the most out of this deal. Let us strike while the iron is hot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain wealth and power by flattering my father. To convince my sister to work with me to solidify the inheritance. To warn my sister of our possible future. To coax and flatter my sister into a partnership To take action

<i>Lines</i>	<i>Subtext</i>	<i>Objective</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool? By day and night he wrongs me. Every hour he flashes into one gross crime or other that sets us all at odds. I'll not endure it. His knights grow riotous and himself upbraids us on every trifle. When he returns from hunting, I will not speak with him. Say I am sick. Put on what weary negligence you please, You and your fellows. I'd have it come to question. If he distaste it, let him to my sister, Whose mind and mine I know in that are one. Idle old man That still would manage those authorities he hath given away. I'll write straight to my sister to hold my (very) course. Prepare for dinner. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed Fool, But other of your insolent retinue Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth in rank and not-to-be-endured-riots. Sir, I had thought by making this well known unto you To have found a safe redress, but now grow fearful, By what you to late have spoke and done, That you protect this course and put it on By your allowance; which if you should, the fault Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has my father done now? Will he never stop? I cannot take anymore. I have put up with more than I wanted to and now I am done. Now I can get Oswald to help me with my plot. I want my father to be unhappy so he will try to go to my sisters. It is not only your Fool I have a problem with. Your entourage is unruly and causes too much unrest. I thought if I spoke with you , you would put a stop to it. Now I see you condone it and if that is the case you will regret it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess To express frustration and win Oswald over to my cause. To pull Oswald into the plot to get rid of my father. To warn my father not to push me too far.

<i>Lines</i>	<i>Subtext</i>	<i>Objective</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A hundred knights! 'Tis politic and safe to let him keep At point a hundred knights! Yes, that on every dream, Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike, He may enguard his dotage with their powers And hold our lives in mercy. –Oswald, I say! Safer than trust too far. I know his heart. What he hath uttered I have writ my sister. If she sustain him and his hundred knights When I have showed th' unfitness –How now Oswald? What, have you writ that letter to my sister? Take you some company and away to horse. Inform her full of my particular fear, And thereto add such reasons of your own As may compact it more. Get you gone, and hasten your return. No, no my lord, this milky gentleness of yours, Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon, You are much more at task for want of wisdom Than praised for harmful mildness. Why not by th' hand, sir? How have I offended? All's not offense that indiscretion finds And dotage terms so. At your choice, sir. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance From those that she calls servants, or from mine? Here me, my lord. What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five, To follow in a house where twice so many Have a command to tend you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I must win my husband to my side and show him how unsafe it is to let my father keep with him an army that at any time could try to turn against us. I don't trust anyone. My sister supports me as well. My beloved servant I know I can trust you to do my work. My husband you are too kind, someone will come and take advantage of you if you are not careful. Why what have I done? I have not offended anyone but you have. It is your choice Do you really need your own servants when we have enough to serve you? You do not need your servants, just relent old man we have you where we want you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To persuade To reassure my husband we are not alone. To take the next step in my plan. To flatter and make sure my servant loves only me. To draw my husband further into my plot and get him to grow some balls. To show dominance To be condescending To drive my point home. To watch him squirm

<i>Lines</i>	<i>Subtext</i>	<i>Objective</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One way I like this well. But being widow and my Gloucester with her May all the building in my fancy pluck Upon my hateful life. Another way The news is not so tart. –I'll read, and answer. I had rather lose the battle than that sister Should loosen him and me. Combine together 'gainst the enemy, For these domestic and particular broils Are not the question here. No - I will go. Not so hot. In his own grace he doth exalt himself More than in you addition. That were the most if he should husband you. Holla, Holla! That eye that told you so looked but asquint. Mean you to enjoy him? An interlude! If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine. Thou art not vanquished, But cozened and beguiled. Say if I do; the laws are mine, not thine. Who can arraign me for 't? Ask me not what I know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is some good news but I do not want my sister alone with Edmund now that her husband is gone. I will die if my sister gets Edmund from me. Let us not deal with our petty problems now and deal with the real problem at hand. I think I see what is going on here. You will regret this. Not so fast, He has rank alone without you giving it to him. He will go no further if he marries you. I am jealous Will you take him? This is amusing I will enjoy watching you die. Edmund you are safe you did not have to answer this challenger. What can you do to me? No one can touch me. Do not speak to me so! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To figure out what my next move should be To get Regan away from Edmund. To rally people to my cause. To try and win. To point out Edmund may be better without Regan. To warn Regan not to anger a jealous woman. To enjoy her pain To reassure Edmund To hold on to my power To hold on to my dignity.

- An analysis of the anticipated physicality of the character, including the character's vocal characteristics, speech patterns, enunciations accents (if any), movement, mobility, age dexterity, and /or disabilities.

Goneril I see very much like a black widow spider. She is trying to get people caught in her web and she devours the people who get in her way. She is not above killing her husband to get what she wants. A spider can be beautiful and still, or it can be quick and vicious. Goneril considers herself regal and in fact thinks that she should be queen above all of her sisters. Her movements should be feminine, royal above anything petty, still, but very powerful. She is very intelligent and always taking in what is going on around her. She is always trying to figure out how she should be in every situation to get the outcome she is looking for. In that way she is like a chameleon because she changes who she is based on what she wants from the situation. She is a fighter as well and if she is backed into a corner she will fight to the death. When she feels confident her stance is feminine and regal, when she feels threatened her stance changes to ground her for a possible assault.



Black Widow Spider

- Beautiful
- Dangerous
- Quick
- Still
- A Killer



Chameleon

- Adapable



Royalty

- Femanine
- Proper
- Intelligent
- Greedy
- Ruthless



Vocally, I want to use more of my lower register. She is older than her sisters and her vocal quality should sound authoritative but feminine at the same time. Her speech should be slow and deliberate because she has calculated everything she says before it comes out of her mouth. She should sound extremely intelligent and educated with everything well articulated and thoughts put together very clearly. The more the play progresses the lower her register becomes until at certain points she sounds almost animal like with a growl in her voice. Her outer veneer begins to crack and the monster inside begins to surface.



King Lear Journal
Beth King as Goneril



Thursday, October 8, 2009 – first read through

First read through for King Lear. Exciting and intimidating. I am eager to take on the role of Goneril but it is not going to be easy. I have limited experience with Shakespeare and Goneril is such an evil character, I hope I can do it justice.

First impressions, Stephen the gentleman the school has hired to play Lear seems very competent and also very pleasant. I sat next to him for the first night. He obviously has a great background with Lear; he told me that he has played Cornwall and Kent before so he will be a great resource for the play. I also have many scenes with him so having a good rapport will make the process easier.

I really enjoyed listening to Stephen read Lear. He was so expressive and clear. He really used his voice well and the emotion came from the bottom of his feet through his entire body. He looked up a few times and we had some moments of connection with the lines and that been very cool. He will be a great person to play off and our scenes will hopefully really blossom.

I have done so much research about Shakespeare and the play that now that I am simply sitting and reading the show it is strange. I feel I have a great background on the show but I do not feel that I have had as much time to just live with the script and my character. I usually spend so much time exploring the language and the characters feelings but I was so focused on research that I did not have as much time to live with the character.

There was a good feeling in the room. Stan challenged us as grad students to play the first read through. He said we all have that feeling of “I don’t want to sound stupid” as so we try to read really well and sort of stifle our creativity. I did not do a very good job of this. I played a little but for the most part I was too nervous. Tiffiney and Kyle did a good job of playing with their characters but I am not sure that Virginia appreciated it. It may have come off that they were not serious instead of them being bold and willing to play.

Friday, October 9, 2009 – second read through

Virginia gave us a few notes in class today about our reading the night before. She told me that she got that I was above everyone else, as Goneril, but she did not think I was mean enough. So I am going to try this evening to unleash the beast in Goneril and see what happens.

This show is so long. I feel badly saying that but I find myself getting bored during the rehearsal of the play. Tragedies are not my favorite and I need to work very hard to help the audience not fall asleep. I do not think I have ever had a show with two read throughs at the beginning of the rehearsal process. I do understand because we are trying to make sure everyone is on the same page with all of the cuts. It does get confusing but I think Virginia is right we need to cut the show down. With 112 audiences coming to see this show we have to make it as accessible as possible.

Second read through went well, I found much more monster in Goneril tonight. There were moments I felt as if I was roaring. I also had some more electricity with Lear and other characters. We were sitting and reading but looking up at each other in pivotal moments. It was exciting to see the passion being expressed even this early in the process.

Sunday, October 11, 2009 – First blocking rehearsal 1.3, 1.4

Ok, I am not sure what I am supposed to include in this journal but I found myself frustrated during rehearsal today. Virginia was sort of micro directing me. I was not sure why she was doing that. Today I was trying to play with the monster in Goneril and she pulled me way back and then began to tell me how to say a few of the lines, she did not give me line readings but it was along that line. She seemed irritated with me, she insinuated a few times that I might not understand a few of the words my character speaks. I tried not to be upset but I did feel foolish in front of the other actors. She seemed to think I was not prepared but I was. I was just trying to play around with the character and I think she interpreted that as me not knowing what the moments were really about. I was just trying to explore the limits of different emotions. I suppose I should speak with her about this. I think this was a miscommunication. I hope that is all it was.

I did find that my initial instincts were right about the character, she is very mean to her father but she tries to manipulate her husband. That worked very well. I

felt good about that part. Shakespeare is intimidating for me and I need to embrace it rather than being scared of it.

Tuesday, October 13, 2009 second blocking rehearsal 1.1

Tonight's rehearsal was a little strange just because it was switched with our first rehearsal because of a scheduling conflict. So we are doing some movement exploration now instead of the first blocking rehearsal. We explored our characters physically by creating pictures with our bodies. We created three tableau pictures, the first began with Lear in the middle and we all chose positions around him. Tiffiney and I (who play Regan and Goneril) were holding each of his hands bowing to him. This first picture was to represent the beginning of the play, so I think that was very accurate. The second tableau was the three sisters we all walked out and struck a pose, I was standing very straight with my right hand extended as if someone were going to take it and kiss it. The third picture was the storm. Lear was on the ground trying to shield himself and we were all around him. I felt as if I was part of the storm itself rather than a character in the storm.

We also walked around the room interacting with people as we went. I had the best time when we were at court. We moved around the room and everyone was instructed to bow to their superiors. I found that I did not bow to anyone, other than Lear and I only did that once. I felt very powerful walking around the room being bowed to, what an uplifting experience. Then the secrets started to go around the room. Who knew what was going on and who was on your side? My husband in the show Albany (Sam Hartley) whispered to me that Lear was planning to give Cordelia the largest portion of land. This was very upsetting to me as Goneril and I set about finding different people to ask them questions if they knew what was going to happen. I then decided I should try and gain some allies, I send my servant Oswald to seek out Edmund and bring him back to me. As Oswald was returning with Edmund my husband Albany was also on his way to me, Oswald simply went to Albany asked him a question and led him off so that I could speak privately with Edmund. It is so funny how just doing an improvisational exercise can be so illuminating. I know how I have been picturing characters that I interact with while doing my research but to get a chance to interact with these characters not only as I see them but as the actors themselves are working and creating them is very exciting.

I found the movement exercises we did very useful and fun. The next section was improvisation as the storm. As I wrote before I felt in the storm that I became

part of the storm rather than simply a character within the storm. The characters in the play that are causing the problems – Edmund, Goneril, Regan, and Cornwall I feel that they are part of the storm itself. They are creating the danger, so when I was moving around the room sometimes I was with wind wiping at Lear's shirt, other times I was a crack of thunder then I was hard rain crashing down onto Lear's body. I found myself pulling at his clothes and pushing him around, trying to keep him away from anyone attempting to help him. Finally the scene ended and I felt a lingering feeling of anger and resentment toward Lear.

Through these experiments I really found that my version of Goneril is powerful, elegant, spoiled, very jealous of her sister Cordelia, intelligent and feels very entitled to the entire kingdom. If she had been born a man she would have inherited everything but she is a woman, even at that she is the oldest so some would say that she and her husband should receive everything. She has never been her father's favorite and she has watched him dote on Cordelia her entire life, taking special care of her and ignoring Goneril and Regan. He now wants her to dote on him and take care of him in his old age, where was he when she was young, why should she take care of him now? Anyway that is what I found myself thinking as we were working on these exercises. I think Goneril does feel insulted by her father and she lashes out at him for it.

The rest of the rehearsal was spent blocking 1.1 the opening scene. I really like the direction I was given about my opening speech. Virginia asked me if I as Goneril knew that her father was going to ask her to speak in front of the court and my answer was no, I did not think so. She suggested I take a little more time with my monologue and I agree I think it was more interesting that way. I was heading in that direction but I did not know how far I could take it. Good rehearsal tonight.

Thursday, October 15, 2009 blocking 2.4, 3.7

Rehearsal this evening was a little slow for me just because I was waiting around a lot. That is just part of doing a show. The scene in the second act we worked on was very short and I only had a few lines. The problem was trying to get everyone on and off the stage because of the way it is constructed. We tried many different ways before we settled on one and even at that I think we still may change it.

The scene from the third act had more for me to do. It is the scene when Regan and Goneril send their father out in the storm. At one moment in the scene I offer Lear my hand, he takes it but then pulls me to him and yells at me. This scene

was intense and I liked the way that we could play together. Then the next time we did the scene he grabbed the back of my head and pulled me to him, that was very nice and unexpected which added to the scene tremendously.

I find as I work through the blocking rehearsals that I was sort of locked into one way of thinking about Goneril. To me she was powerful, mean and unrelenting but that isn't very interesting. She needs to change throughout the play. I need to make her more human, I was thinking of her in a heightened sense like a cartoon character and she can have some of those qualities but I need to make her human as well.

Kyle Broussard (Duke of Cornwall) gave me a great version of King Lear with Laurence Olivier. The production is good but the women in the show are spectacular. The woman that plays Goneril (Dorothy Tutin) was exceptional. She played the role with so much depth I had to watch her a few times to understand everything she was doing. The language flew out of her mouth with impeccable diction and clarity. I was so impressed with her, I have seen a few other versions of King Lear and they all have their good points but I like her performance of Goneril the best. Now I have to incorporate the experience I have gained from watching her performance without intentionally trying to duplicate it.

I have a theory that I am sure others have thought of as well, that opera is to music as Shakespeare is to theater. Opera is huge, voices, emotions, drama everything is heightened and it takes an enormous amount of energy to perform. Opera really pushes singers/actors to the limits of what they can do mentally and physically. In a lot of ways Shakespeare does the same thing. So much knowledge of text, style research goes into the production and it takes an incredible amount of energy to perform from the clarity of the text to the huge emotions it takes on. Shakespeare even requires breath control and phrasing the same way singing does. When I found myself marking in my breaths in my Shakespeare monologues that is when the connection really happened for me because I have to mark in my music where to take breaths as well. But I have found a major difference.

Opera is about large sweeping ideas. You have one emotion and you sing about different variations of that one emotion, at least in traditional opera. Shakespeare is not one emotional idea it is many but more often than not it is two, the one your character is speaking about and the one your character is fighting against feeling. This became very evident to me in rehearsal when I was trying to think of a monologue as an opera aria and exploring different facets of the same emotional idea.

I realized that was not enough. There was so much more going on and it made my character flat. It is a very interesting comparison that I will have to explore more, but I also have to realize that it does not always work in every instance.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 – Run our Act I

So we have lost a member of our cast. Jason Francis one of our MFA graduate acting students has been diagnosed with rectal cancer. He has no choice but to drop out of the show. Jason was playing Gloucester, a very important role in the show. Now we do not know what will happen. I am much less concerned about the show and more concerned about my friend. Jason and I have always been very close we share a love of musical theater and we both love to giggle. For the first year of my time here Jason was my closest friend. That has changed a little now but I still consider him a very good friend. This has hit everyone in the cast, class, school very hard. I can see it in everyone's faces, we are trying to just go on but part of me does not want to.

Virginia has said that she is trying to find someone to replace Jason. I think that is a good idea. I know some of the undergraduates do not understand that but it would look better if someone older were playing Gloucester. Everyday the news from Jason seems to be worse. First he has cancer then spots on his liver and now more cancer. It is like this play it just gets worse and worse until everyone dies at the end. King Lear. I guess doing a play about suffering and pain while a friend is experiencing that should give us something to use as actors. I would rather have Jason back and have to dig deeper into myself. We do not get to choose.

Ok so the play. Steven (Lear) had a really good idea about my character. He said that we could play with the idea that Goneril might be pregnant. Or at least that she has told the King she is pregnant in hopes of him giving her a larger portion of the kingdom. That makes his curse later about Goneril's womb drying up and if she does have children to make them of spleen even more cruel. We worked through that scene with that idea in mind and it makes it more fun for me and more interesting for the audience I think. We did run it by Virginia and she agreed!

Virginia said that my speech is too contemporary; I am also not loud enough. It is always so hard when we finally get to Howell because we always forget how hard it is to project in there. I will have to work on that. She also had another note for me and for Regan. Right now we have been playing that we are happy about the land Lear gives us, but she wanted us to play with being unhappy about it. After we ran it

once that way she was right, it made more sense for us to be unhappy. It adds to my jealousy of Cordelia and establishes us as negative characters.

Friday, October 23, 2009 – blocking scenes 4.2 and 5.1

It was decided that Sam Hartley would play the role of Gloucester and replace Jason Francis. Sam had previously been playing Albany (my husband). Sam and I have a good chemistry together and I am sad to have him taken away. My new Albany is an undergrad that I do not know very well, Peter Swanke is his name I believe. One of the reason's I am not happy about the switch is that I am not a small girl and Sam and I looked pretty good together. I do not want to have a husband that it looks like I could crush if I leaned on him. I am sure it will be fine. I also feel badly for Sam because I know he is overwhelmed. Gloucester is a huge role and he has had no time to prepare, yes he was the understudy but he was not prepared to jump into this role.

We found out today that Jason has to go to New York to see a specialist because his cancer is aggressive and they are not sure what to do with him. The graduate students are trying to help him and his family in any way we can. We are trying to ask Linda (Jason's wife) what we can do to help but she is very private and it is hard to get answers. Everyone is still sad and shocked. We are trying to put it out of our minds when we have to but it hard. We want to make sure that all the work Jason has done on his thesis has not been in vain. We want him to be able to perform the role next semester or at least be able to submit the research he has already completed. We spoke with Harris today and it seems like the faculty are going to do everything they can to make sure Jason can graduate. That is good. Now we just have to pray for him to get better.

Ok rehearsal.. Today I came to rehearsal early because I was not called until 8:30 pm. I sat in the lobby and worked on memorizing my lines and also on articulation. I used some of the exercises Stan showed us particularly the one were we stick our tongue out and try to speak our lines. That one always helps me. I felt as if I was doing a better job of being heard in rehearsal. Tonight I found out I have to kiss Daniel (Edmund). That is always very interesting, you never know how the other person is going to handle it. He was very professional and we spoke about the etiquette of stage kissing which he was very respectful of so I think it will be just fine. Daniel is like my little brother so thinking about kissing him was a little strange at first, but when I just picture him as Edmund it is just fine. I did discover that he

kisses me and then a few scenes later he kisses Tiffiney (Regan). All I have to say is I hope none of us get sick.

I think my favorite line that I get to speak in the play is “O the difference of man and man.” Virginia threatened to cut it because I was savoring the line too much. I do not get to savor that many of my lines, to savor one I think isn’t asking too much. But I do not want to lose the line so I will try to shorten it up.

Sunday, October 25, 2009 – blocking 5.3 death scene

This scene is crazy because so many people die in this scene!! I poison Regan, she dies, then I kill myself, they drag our dead bodies onstage, Edmund dies, Cordelia dies then Lear dies. Did I miss anything?

I think the staging of the scene is working out well. I am getting used to my new Albany (Peter) he seems to be doing a fine job. The fight between Edgar (Ryan) and Edmund (Daniel) looks pretty good. I really wanted to find a way to get a hold of one of the daggers they were using for the fight to take offstage to kill myself with (as Goneril). I asked Virginia about it and we worked it out but then Ryan suggested I take the knife out of Edmunds body and then take it offstage. That is what I had in mind anyway but Edmund had taken it and laid it by his side so I wasn’t going to push it but then I got to do it anyway. So I get to pull the dagger that is mortally wounding Edmund out of his body and take it off to kill myself!!! Ha, that is cool. What a way for me to leave the stage. The next time the audience sees me my dead body will be wheeled onstage with Regan. The technical term for this wagon is an ekkyklema which was used to carry dead bodies onto the stage in ancient Greece because the deaths never occurred onstage.

Monday, October 26, 2009 – Run our Act II (4-5)

Tonight we ran our Act II which consists of Shakespeare’s Acts IV and V. Most of my larger scenes are in Act I. The stage is coming further along and luckily we are able to rehearse on the set while they are building it. The set consists of a large number of stairs and levels with a rake at the front of the stage. This is very cool but it is very tall and I worry about falling off the set. They are not going to have any railings on the top of the set and that makes me nervous because I stand up there all the time. Pat Vendetti the set designer has assured me that they will make the set safe but with huge dresses on, lights and fight scenes I am afraid someone may get hurt.

The main reason seems to be that the railings would ruin the visual effect of the stage. All I have to say is I do not want to fall, and I do not want to feel that I am in danger!! We shall see how this unfolds.

Tuesday, October 27, 2009 – First run of the whole show

I am really not sure why we ran the entire show tonight. It was very rough, lots of people missing entrances and forgetting lines. We are all trying very hard to get off book as quickly as possible but it is Shakespeare and sometimes it takes longer to stick with you. I thought I was off book for all of Act I but at the end of my last scene in Act I numerous things went wrong. Peter (Albany) said one of his lines at the wrong time which caused Oswald to come onstage too early and I jumped a whole paragraph of my lines. I then became flustered and said, “Shit” really loud (how proud am I to have that in my thesis). I then proceeded to call line a few times and Virginia yelled from the audience, “Pick up your script”. So obviously this was not my best rehearsal.

It does turn into a bit of a competition, who can get off book the quickest. We all felt bad because Steven (Lear) was mostly off book for the run and he has the largest part. All of us were backstage trying to make sure we could go on without our scripts.

The first act was especially rough because we had not run it for about a week. Many of the undergraduates that have small parts like “soldier number one” totally missed their entrances. I do have to hand it to Virginia for not losing her temper because it would not have helped anything. Some of the undergrads have to wait around for three hours to run out onstage and shake a sword for a minute and a half. That is not much fun and she, I think was keeping that in mind.

The second act went much more smoothly but then we had just run it the night before. It was a very long evening and it just felt a little early to be running the show. We did cut some time off the run which was good but we are still trying to cut more because the show is just too damned long.

Wednesday, October 28, 2009 – work Shakespeare’s Act I

So we ran most of my largest scenes tonight. Virginia wants me to really yell and scream during scene 3. I am a little surprised she wants it so large. I am going to

go with it. I just hope I do not hurt my voice, I will ask Stan Brown (our vocal teacher) about what I should do to make sure I am not damaging my voice.

Rehearsal tonight went well and Virginia seemed pleased with some of the choices I am making with my character. Someone told me that Virginia played Goneril once, which if she did I am not sure why she did not mention it. I know that Sasha Dobson played Goneril a few years back but I did not know about Virginia. I will have to ask her about it.

We ran the first scene over and over again. My back started hurting so badly from just standing there for so long. Virginia began to micro manage our deliveries a little bit but I just went with it.

Thursday, October 29, 2009 – work Shakespeare's Act II

I am only in one scene in Act 2 and it is the last scene. So I waited around for a few hours and memorized lines, played video games on my phone tried to entertain myself until my scene was worked on. I am not complaining, that is part of the business but it just sucked that I had to be there at 6:30 when I wasn't used until 9:30.

This is the scene where Lear has run to my sister Regan for help and he finds out that we are working together. Steven (Lear) and I usually have moment where I try to reconnect with him by taking his hand and he turns it into an angry attack. Tonight Steven pulled me to him and I struggled to try and get away. I gave a final push with vocal disgust and Virginia seemed to think that worked well.

The blocking of the last moments in the scene has always been a little strange and so we spent some time working through different blocking patterns to see what would work the best. What we settled on is much clearer and helps us not to upstage ourselves as much while speaking to Gloucester (Sam).

Friday, October 30, 2009 – work Shakespeare's Act III

I am not feeling very well this evening. I am really tired and feeling like I am getting sick. I tried to get a lot of sleep today and hope I can fight off whatever this is. I also received an e-mail from one of my classmates asking me to not give him critiques in class because for some reason I am upsetting him when I do it. This came from Daniel (Edmund) and we have a few scenes together not to mention having to kiss onstage. Thank goodness we do not have that scene tonight and hopefully we can talk and get it straightened out.

This is another evening when I am not onstage in the act until the final scene. This evening I spent going over the two lines I have to say in the scene for tonight and reading a trashy novel Tiffiney(Regan) gave me to read. Not much to report from this evening, we ran the scene a few times and then I went home. Although Virginia did decide that if we were not onstage until later in the rehearsal we did not have to show up at 6:30, that was nice .

Sunday, November 1, 2009 – work Shakespeare's Act IV

Tonight we ran the scene where I kiss Daniel (Edmund) and find out that Kyle (Cornwall) is dead. Daniel is acting like nothing is wrong so I will do the same. I think he is surprised I have not approached him about the e-mail but to be honest I am tired of dealing with stupid stuff like that. I will keep my mouth shut in class if it will make him happy.

The scene tonight actually went really well and we worked the kiss quite a bit. I think it is coming off very sexy which is nice. I felt good about the scene because I am trying to be in a good mood after kissing Daniel (Edmund) and it carries through the rest of the scene with Peter (Albany). I actually laugh at my husband when he is trying to berate me and I really like that. I worked the language of this scene quite a bit today to make sure that when I got up there I had some different ways to try the lines.

I did feel badly for the undergrad that plays Oswald because he just seemed to get so nervous when we got onstage tonight. He kept forgetting his lines and having to call for them even though he does not have very many lines. He really seemed to lose his lines when I was looking at him and I think it just threw him off. I guess I can be intimidating to an undergrad because I am a graduate student. I talked with him after the scene and joked around with him a little about trying to calm down. I hope that helped.

Monday, November 2, 2009 – work Shakespeare's Act V

We reworked my death scene tonight. I no longer get to pull the dagger out of Edmund's body. I was a little bummed at first but I am dealing with it. I understand that it was not working. Now, Peter (Albany) comes over and threatens me so I pull the dagger on him and then run offstage screaming! I does work but I am a little

worried about hurting my voice. As long as I only do the blood curdling scream once a night I should be fine but I am going to be extra careful.

Tuesday, November 3, 2009 – Run the entire show

Last night I asked Virginia what I could be doing to make my performance better. She said that she felt that she was still teaching me things about Goneril and that at this point in the rehearsal process I should be teaching her about Goneril. I understand what she means but I have felt that numerous times I have come into a scene with an intention and she has changed it. Granted she has been right but I would have liked to explore some of the intentions on my own before being told what to do, and find some of those things on my own.

So this evening I wanted to make sure I was really giving it my all. I focused on slowing down, listening and deep breathing. I walked out onto stage and instead of just barreling through my lines I took a deep breath. I noticed that I had been breathing very shallowly. I realized that to take a really deep breath I almost had to concentrate because I was tense. Once I started really breathing I noticed that numerous times I was almost at the point of tears in a place I had never been before. I really found this helped a lot!!!

I was also concentrating on trying to find reasons for my character to open up physically. Virginia had mentioned that I am profile too much and I need to stay open to the audience. She is right and I was working on that.

Harris was also at rehearsal tonight and he said my walk was too bouncy and I needed to widen my stride and be more sexual. I had been so worried about so many other things I was not paying attention to my walk and he was very correct, I widened my gait and I felt more grounded and sensual.

Virginia told me a made really great progress tonight. I felt I did as well.

Wednesday, November 4, 2009 – Run OUR Act I

Well we arrived at the theater tonight and Virginia informed us that she had to make some more cuts to the script. I think she is right; the show is just too long for our audiences. This rehearsal was hard because we would be in the middle of a scene without our scripts in hand and Virginia would give us a cut. I really like to have my script with me so that I can write it down but we just kept trying to plow ahead. I tried to get everything written down and committed to memory as fast as possible. I

did lose a small paragraph but I do not miss it. It is easier to understand now and I realize everyone was getting cuts, not just me.

Before rehearsal tonight I decided to warm up as if I were going to sing in this performance. I spent about half an hour at four o'clock doing vocalizes and singing the arias I have memorized. I do feel that warming myself up that way really gets me vocally ready to project. I get used to using my breath in a healthy way that translates to speaking onstage very well. I just am starting to feel vocally tired. I have been fighting off a cold so that might be why, but I have also been hard on my voice. Stan always says that if you are coming from a place of truth when you scream or use your voice harshly that you will not hurt yourself. I usually am coming from a real place but when we have to run the scene five times, sometimes I do not hook in as well every single time. I have had a tendency to lose my voice for shows in the past and I am trying very hard not to lose my voice for this. I have been taking extra vitamins, drinking lots of water and trying to keep myself in good vocal shape.

Kyle (Cornwall) told me that I really was rocking tonight during my scenes. I hope he was right. I felt that it went well. Virginia will give us notes tomorrow because we finished late so we will see.

Thursday, November 5, 2009 – Run Act II

We ran act two and got some more cuts. I did not have many cuts as I do not have as many lines in the second act as I do in the first. Most of my notes tonight had to do with blocking. I am sometimes standing in front of other people and the picture on the stage is compromised. I just need to keep in mind where I am and what is going on in the scene, sometimes I move too much.

The biggest thing that happened tonight was that I fell on my ass. During my last scene I am on my knees tending to Daniel (Edmund) and Peter (Albany) comes over to me confronts me, pulls my hair and I grab a dagger next to me threaten him with it and run offstage to kill myself, simple right? Well my dress got caught under my foot, I tried to stand up and fell over. The mood of the scene was completely lost and everyone started to laugh including Virginia. I picked myself up and tried to move on but it was sort of useless at that point. I will have to try harder to get my skirt out of my way.

Monday, November 9, 2009 – Work Act I

We worked through Act I again this evening. Tonight was more about being understood and if Virginia could not understand us she would stop us and make us go over the section she could not understand. For the most part I think we are doing very well with this. I only had a few notes with this and it was mostly when I am very angry and yelling, I just needed to slow the speech down a bit and I was fine. Virginia also feels that I am getting too close to Steven (Lear) during our confrontation scene. I need to be aware that he has his men with him and he may decide to try and hit me if I am too close. That will add another layer onto that scene, which is already feeling pretty good.

I have discovered that Virginia likes it if you bring ideas onstage with you and try them out as long as they make sense. I was talking with Oswald offstage and we decided that he would be the gentleman I was talking about being hit in the next scene. She really liked that and commented on it. It is good to think I am finally getting the feel for what Virginia wants. It is very hard because every director is different some want you to try lots of things some don't. I am always trying to figure out what a director wants from me and turn myself into whatever they want. That is good in one way and bad in another. I still have to try and stay true to myself as an artist....well and get paid.

The knights keep forgetting to yell after they go offstage. Their yelling is a cue for me to yell back at them and it is frustrating because I need them to remember. Steven (Lear) actually stood offstage tonight and helped because the other men keep forgetting. (Thank you Steven!)

Vocal fatigue is starting to hit and I can feel junk on my vocal chords. I am not sure if I am just fighting fatigue or sickness but I am going to take it easy with my voice. I am going to try not to talk very much during the day and do some nice and easy vocalizes tomorrow night. Sleep seems to be a major key for me as well, so I am going to bed early.

Tuesday, November 10, 2009 – Work Act II

Act two went much better tonight. Virginia was stopping us for very picky things but that is alright it apparently needed to be done. I need more urgency in my scene with Daniel (Edmund) because of the impending battle. I am also apparently lifting my skirt up too high when I am coming up the stairs. I will have to work on

that, I just do not want to fall on my face; however I do not want to give the audience that kind of a show either.

During my next scene I have an aside right away, I was entering saying my line to the audience and then joining my husband but Virginia would like me to say the line when I already am with my husband. That is fine I can do it in such a way that it still seems like an aside.

It was pointed out to me today that Goneril (Me) seems like she is pregnant in the beginning of the play and then it is confusing because she no longer seems to be. Steven (Lear) and I had discussed that possibility of Goneril lying and saying she is pregnant to try and get more money and land out of her father. But now we have changed the scene and the daughters do not know that Lear is planning to give them their inheritance that evening. It therefore makes no sense that Goneril would lie to her father about a baby if she does not know about his plans. So we decided that we should let it go because I do not have any way to convey that she is lying and I certainly do not want to rework my whole role with the idea that she actually is pregnant.

Ekkyklemaahhhhh. The death wagon has arrived. It is a large wheel barrel that Tiffiney (Regan) and I lay on pretending to be dead as they wheel us onstage. I do not have a problem with this except I really did not feel safe. The way the cart moves they lift up one side put us at an angle which makes me feel like I could slide right off the thing. We worked with it and I started to feel better but I still do not feel comfortable. I suppose I will get used to it.

Sunday, November 16, 2009 – TECH

What a long day. We started at 11:00 am with a cue to cue. It was going very well until we got to the storm. There is something like 140 cues in the storm so it took a long time. We took a dinner break at 4:00 pm came back at 6:00 and finished the cue to cue. Then we ran the entire show. I was so tired not to mention my voice. I cannot imagine how Lear (Steven) got through the day. Today was much more about the technical side and less about us. Virginia made a big batch of cookies and someone brought bagels and cream cheese to keep us going through the long day.

One note I had that I have been getting repeatedly is that I am lifting my rehearsal skirt too high when I am coming up the stairs. I have been trying to hold it lower but because of the angle of the stage I am going to have to try something

different. Virginia said I should try holding it with one hand the way Tiffiney (Regan) is doing it. I will have to try that, I just hope I do not fall on my face.

One thing I am really glad of is that Virginia decided to cut the death wagon. I hate that thing. I always feel scared that I am going to fall. She is afraid that the audience will laugh at the wagon, and they might. So anyway it is gone and I am happy.

Monday, November 17, 2009 – First Dress

Tonight was the first night with our costumes, and they are beautiful!! Cece Sickler (costume designer) really outdid herself. I love my costumes! It is more difficult now that we have our costumes though. During the first scene the Fool (Trent) carries Cordelia's (Lucy) up the stairs and he tripped on her train and dropped her on the floor! No one was hurt thankfully but we had to stop the rehearsal for a moment because we were all laughing.

My costumes are restrictive and so adjusting to the garments takes some time. I am also wearing a corset which limits my movement even more but it also adds to my character because I am forced to be very upright. Tonight was all about working with the trains on our dresses in the first scene to make sure not one was tripping and figuring out our costume changes. The monitors were also not on so when we were changing in the dressing rooms we had no concept of how long we had until our next entrance. Also we have undergraduates that are assigned to help with costume changes and whenever we needed someone to help us they were never there. I understand that is sucks to be on a crew and it gets boring but we really do need help with our costumes because we cannot get changed by ourselves.

I had a very fast change at the beginning of the show that I am now going to do offstage left because I barely made my entrance and I was still out of breath from running down to the dressing rooms. The only major mishap I had was with the knife at then end of the play. I had a cape on and I could not get a hold of the knife so I was scrambling for a few moments until I could grab it. That was not great, but it is to be expected with first dress.

Everyone looked so good, it really helped to pull the show together. I think everyone looks great.

Tuesday, November 18, 2009 – Final Dress

So Cece (costume designer) told me not to wear my corset tonight. She said it was making a really strange shape in my dress and it was distracting. So I tried my dress on without my corset and it actually fit. So they asked me to do the show without it tonight and see how it goes. I could really get a lot more breath tonight and I think it added to my performance.

Stan came back this evening with rolled up newspaper for all of the grad students and asked us to hit things with it and do our lines. We have done this exercise before and it usually does help. It requires us to use more air and sound on all of our lines. I did this for about ten minutes before we began the show.

I felt like I really nailed it tonight. I felt so connected and in the moment when I was onstage. I do not know how it read but I felt great. I really warmed up before the show lots of vocalizes and used a ton of breath. When I was onstage I tried to breathe and stay in the moment. I felt I was doing a great job. I was exhausted after the show. I felt like I had been hit with a ton of bricks. It took so much energy I almost felt as if I had done an opera. I know I have made that connection before but I really felt I was using that much energy and breath.

We had photo call after the show which also added another half and hour to the night before we could get changed. I really gave the show my all tonight. I hope it was worth it.

Wednesday, November 19, 2009 – Preview Night

We had our first audience tonight and I was a little angry. I was not feeling well today I stayed home from class and slept all day. I was exhausted from last night and I knew I needed energy for this evening.

I am glad to finally have an audience but 112 students (intro to theater) are required to attend and for the most part do not understand Shakespeare. I was prepared for them to be very bored and not respond much. They actually were somewhat responsive but then during the last act it seemed as if they were laughing at everything. They laughed at the fight scene at the end and when I ran off screaming to kill myself, they laughed as well. I was angry. I know they do not know how to respond and Virginia told me that I should not worry about it, that she thinks I am doing fine and not to let this audience shake me. She is right but it is nevertheless disconcerting.

Others in the cast have told me numerous times I am doing a great job with my role. But it does make you question what you are doing when an audience laughs when it is supposed to be serious. I guess I will wait until tomorrow night's audience to see if it really is the performance or just a young 112 audience. Thank God she got rid of the death wagon!

Thursday, November 19, 2009 – Opening Night

The show went well tonight. My throat is feeling very tired so I am trying not to talk at all during the day. Luckily I do not have any classes today; our professors gave us the day off because of the show. Virginia came around and gave us all little notes before the show which was nice. I was excited for a more educated audience and I hoped that would solve my problem with the laughing in the second act. Unfortunately they still laughed a bit. I am not sure what I should do about that. Virginia suggested that I pull back just a bit on my scream at the end. I will work on that and think about it some more. I really had some wonderful moments in the show tonight. I find that I look forward to 1.3 the scene I have with Lear (Steven). I always try to breathe and let the moments take me where they will. I try to let myself be in the moment and react to things as they happen instead of using the predesigned reactions I have been using. I feel the most “in the moment” during that scene that I have ever felt onstage – so far.

I did almost lose my balance and fall during my last scene onstage tonight. I was reaching for the knife and I lost my balance. I almost fell on top of Edmund (Daniel), thank god that did not happen. I think I need to take a moment when I am reaching down to console Edmund to move the knife so I can grab it more easily with my hair being pulled at the same time. I will try to do that tomorrow night. I just need to sleep. Sometimes after the show I feel as if I have been hit by a truck.

Friday, November 20, 2009 – Second night of the run

OK so the review came out in the paper today. It was good but it mentioned almost all of the other grad students except for me. I am pissed! I have been giving this role everything I have, no holding back and ...nothing. I am starting to feel like nothing too. I am giving this role so much energy and using my voice in a way that is borderline dangerous for what? Do I really suck? I feel cheated because of all the work and relentless energy I have given to this show. Cornwall (Kyle) has told me

numerous times that I am doing great work in this show but maybe he was wrong. I do not feel like going to do the show tonight. I felt worthless. And soooooo tired.

I spoke with Kyle before the show and he said he knew I would feel this way. He knows me too well. He said I am fabulous and lots of people he has talked to agree. He said I should not change anything about my performance. I tried to just get into a good mood before the show, playing fun music, joking around with the girls in the dressing room. It did help. I felt better. I also worked on the end of the show. I pulled back a little in the last scene and played it dead serious instead of on the melodramatic side as I was playing it before. It really helped. The audience began to laugh a little when I said "if not I'll ne'er trust medicine" but then I held it and they stopped. I was more scared and reactive during the fight scene with Edmund (Daniel) and Edgar (Ryan) which also helped. I moved the knife earlier and got it just right at the end, I also shortened up the time between me pulling the knife and my exit. There was still a little chuckling but I think it is because I am a mean character and they enjoy seeing me get it in the end. In any case I felt much better about the scene and I think it really helped the show overall as well. And we do not have a show tomorrow night because of the Husker game. Thank god because my voice needs a break, so does the rest of me. I have to work at the mall but it is still a night off from the show.

One more thing happened tonight I forgot to mention. Gloucester (Sam) fell off the back of the stage this evening! He is blindfolded and he was set in the wrong place on the stage. There are no railings on the back of the stage because it ruins the effect of the set so he fell right off. Luckily there is a platform behind the set for this reason but it is still a four foot drop. Thank god he was not hurt but that scares me. This set is very dangerous with all of the steps, the rake and the drop off on the back. Let's just hope and pray nothing else happens.

Sunday, November 22, 2009 – First and only matinee

So it really seems like no one wants to be here today. We had a day off and now we have to come back and do one more show before Thanksgiving break. Everyone is tired and not particularly in a good mood. The audience is also smaller than we have had in the past and Sunday audiences are notoriously old and quiet.

We started the show and I could tell even Lear (Steven) was pulling back and saving his voice. Everyone just seemed a little less alive today. The show went alright and Virginia was in the audience and even she said it was still good but I could tell we

were really dragging. Amber our stage manager said the show ran about ten minutes longer than normal. Wow! I guess we were all tired and taking our time. So happy to have a break and sleep in tomorrow.

Wednesday, December 2, 2009 – Understudy Performance

This evening was very interesting. The girl that plays my understudy (Jessica Elwell) did a really great job. She not only knew her lines but she really focused on my interpretation of the character and tried to emulate my performance. That was very interesting to see. It was actually a great learning experience. I noticed things that I liked and things that I did not like. I did not notice that I was so still, I think had a tendency to blend in because of that. Unfortunately that was a conscious choice I wanted her to be regal and seem as if she was above everyone else and that meant refined movements that did not read as well onstage.

This was an opportunity that many people do not get to see your own performance, to a point, from the audience. I noticed that Jessica's voice was much higher in pitch than mine and that was distracting because I very much was using the bottom of my range. She sounded kind of winy at certain points but she has some voice work to do and I know that was not a reflection of my performance. I did have moments especially with Lear that were very good. The daughter's kind of blend together. I am not sure if that is a reflection on my acting or the script or the cutting of the script we used. In any case this evening was very enjoyable and the undergrads did a great job.

Thursday, December 3, 2009 – Night without Regan

So I came to the theater tonight and I was informed that Tiffiney who plays Regan is sick and will not be there. Katie Gell is her understudy and she will be going on this evening. Wow! What a shock! It is not like Tiffiney to not be at a show so she must be very sick. But this affects my performance because I have a lot of scenes with Regan. I spoke with Katie and she was a little freaked but she just did the role last night so she feels prepared. Luckily Tiffiney's costume fits Katie pretty well with just a few adjustments.

It gave the show a different feeling to have Katie there. We were all trying to make sure that she felt comfortable and that she knew what was coming next with costume changes that she had never had to do before. She did a really good job! She

was not as good as Tiffiney but she filled in so well, we had no problems. I am really glad she had the opportunity to do the show with us because she had worked so hard and she deserved the chance to really show it.

Oddly enough helping Katie through the show gave me sense calm about my own role. I knew what I was doing and I was not worried. We were all working as a team backstage and that was really great.

Friday, December 4, 2009

My husband came to the show this evening. I am not sure what to think about the comments I have gotten about this show. He said that I did not stand out in the show. I performed my role well but it was small and I sort of blended in with the rest of the sisters.

I have noticed with this show a strange silence from people who have seen the show. No one is telling me that I am doing a good job or that they have enjoyed my performance. There is just nothing. That is really strange for me because I am usually one of the ones in a show that people really enjoy. To not be one of those people is very confusing. I am putting so much energy into this show and into this character that I feel I am not getting the kind of response I was expecting.

Saturday, December 5, 2009 – Last Show

I cannot express how difficult it was to go on tonight. I felt like a good deal of my energy was being wasted because I was not getting through to the audience. I really had to must strength to get through the show. I was so glad when it was finally over. This show has been very difficult for me. To put this in context when I first began singing opera I did not like it but the first opera role I had everyone went crazy about how good I was telling me that I should really pursue singing opera and that I could have a real future in that genre. I have not had that much experience with Shakespeare and this was my first large role in a Shakespearean play. I guess I expected the same reaction. Kyle Broussard and Lucy Lockamy kept telling me they thought I was great. Virginia thought I did well too. But others have told me differently...I am trying to decide if they just have different taste.

Regardless I did really give it everything I had. I worked my ass off, I learned a lot and I felt I had some breakthroughs with being “in the moment” onstage.

Post show thoughts

I have been very perplexed about this show. I think because I have done so much research and we all feel so much pressure to be great in this show that I have not let myself enjoy the process. Also I do not generally do shows that are so tragic I much prefer to work on Musicals or Comedy. I think the tone of the show and the character brought me down emotionally. I have realized through this process that I really do not enjoy working on tragedies. I will do one if someone is paying me but if it is up to me I will not do another for awhile. I have learned a ton but now it is time for us all to move on with our lives.

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

So much has happened since this show was performed. Jason Francis our friend and colleague died on January 11, 2010. His death has left a hole in our company and in our lives. Ryan Kathman's wife gave birth to a beautiful baby girl a few months later.

I have had a lot of time to think about the show, my life and my portrayal of Goneril these last few months. I think I did eventually find the humanity in Goneril. As the run went on I began to take more and more risks. It is extremely scary to try new things in front of an audience. But I did it and I feel I am beginning to understand the acting process in a very different way. I let the character overwhelm me at first. I think I was afraid to have any of my own ideas about the character because I was worried that I would be wrong. I just kept thinking that I had to please Virginia when the truth is I had to please myself. Find connections to the character through myself rather than try to capture someone completely foreign and fake. Once I began to trust myself it became easier. I could not see it when it was happening though...that is very interesting. Amazing what kind of perspective you can have a few months down the road. Goneril has been a great experience for me. I really grew during this production, it was hard but I am glad I took the journey. I am looking forward to new challenges and exciting possibilities. I guess I really learned that life is precious and that is why tragedies exist to make us appreciate life.

Interviews for Thesis

Harris Smith

Professor of Acting / Stage Movement

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film

Question: What do you think I did well in this performance?

Answer: Overall I thought you portrayed Goneril very well and did a good job as one of the villains or antagonists of the play. I thought you embodied her selfishness and her self-centeredness very well. Vocally your techniques was quite good, you made sense out of the text. Although I felt you could have taken her further. You took direction very well when I suggested that you and Daniel add some more sexuality to the kiss it was greatly improved. I did see in the second performance I watched that you had grown as a character and you were feeling freer to be in the moment during the performance.

Question: What could I have improved on in my performance?

Answer: You could have gone further with her physicality. The period of the production in some ways seemed to get in the way of you making more interesting choices physically. But in speaking with you I am glad to hear that it was your choice to make her that way and not just lack of physical exploration. One thing I would like to see you work on as an actor would be to surprise yourself. Don't go into a show with everything predetermined, don't be afraid to explore.

Question: What kind of feedback did you receive from others about my performance?

Answer: Did not speak to anyone about the production.

Question: Do you feel I made progress as an actor in this show?

Answer: Yes, I think you are becoming more confident as an actor in your craft. It is unfortunate that you were not able to participate in *As You Like It*, but having said that yes you have progressed vocally, emotionally and physically. You are now aware of making many more choices and what I find exciting is for you to take some of the characters you have worked on here and develop them. Also film and T.V. seems to be working very well for you so I would love to see you get a character role in a film or T.V. series.

Question: Do you feel I was a cohesive part of the cast?

Answer: Of course, the thing about your class is that the connection was there from day one. You all work very well together and you were lucky to have that because it is very hard to take risks in an unstable environment.

Tice Miller
Professor Emeritus of Dramatic Literature
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film

Question: What do you think I did well in this performance?

Answer: I believed you were the daughter of a King. I thought you handled the language pretty well. I thought you had figured out that she was not a good person. I definitely think that came across. I would have liked to see you bring Goneril a little closer to you rather than you reaching so far from yourself to play the role.

Question: What could I have improved on in my performance?

Answer: I really saw your character like Hilary Clinton. She understands how power works very much like Goneril and Regan. You did have some of that but Goneril should feel completely comfortable in the spotlight and always know exactly what to say. I think you could have added more complexity to the character.

Question: What kind of feedback did you receive from others about my performance?

Answer: I saw the show and left town.

Question: Do you feel I made progress as an actor in this show?

Answer: Yes, you did. It was your first major Shakespeare role and now when you do another you will be more comfortable.

Question: Do you feel I was a cohesive part of the cast?

Answer: Oh yes. I think you fit in with the rest of the cast quite well.

Virginia Smith

Associate Professor of Acting / Directing
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film

Question: What do you think I did well in this performance?

Answer: I think you worked really hard and created a complex character. I felt like you were a little behind in the beginning. I don't know if it's true, but it was my impression. There were words you hadn't looked up and it seemed like you hadn't wrapped your mind and your mouth around the role until rehearsals started. I always prefer to work with an actor who is really prepared. We begin our work together at the first rehearsal, but hopefully both of us have been working like crazy to get to this day. Again, you may have been really prepared, but my impression was otherwise. As a professional you need to manage my impressions. You got on board pretty quickly and there weren't any problems with the rest of the process at all. As I said in the beginning you worked really hard and created a really interesting character.

Question: What could I have improved on in my performance?

Answer: I enjoyed your performance. I like the way you attacked every scene. I particularly liked the scene when Lear held and scared you. It always moved you (Beth) and you worked in character with whatever variation of emotion it might be that night. You could have improved your performance by being as much in every moment as you were in that one. And in the same way that Steven provided that fire for you, found more ways to create it for others.

Question: What kind of feedback did you receive from others about my performance?

Answer: You know, I don't get very much specific feedback on actors. My feedback was that the play worked and that the ensemble told a good and believable story.

Question: Do you feel I made progress as an actor in this show?

Answer: Yes. I think during the semester, in class and in the Lear performances you let yourself be an actress rather than a singer/actress. I felt like you are much more able to embody other characters now. There is still sometimes a gloss of "performance" over it, but that quality worked fine for Goneril.

Question: Do you feel I was a cohesive part of the cast?

Answer: Yes. Though you thinking that people didn't like it and that the performance wasn't well received really surprised me when we spoke about that during the run. We had several great reviews and lots of good word of mouth. Maybe I'm the one in not in the grape vine, but you should find a positive place to live with the cast to support you during a run.

I think you did a fine job on Goneril as your thesis role.

Stan Brown

Associate Professor of Acting / Voice Specialist

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film

Question: What do you think I did well in this performance?

Answer: Your vocal work has been and is, consistently, the best aspect of your stage work.

Question: What could I have improved on in my performance?

Answer: Working more and more and more and more from a place in yourself that isn't aware or concerned that you're being watched, judged, perceived, or thought about.

Question: What kind of feedback did you receive from others about my performance?

Answer: None actually.

Question: Do you feel I made progress as an actor in this show?

Answer: You have grown tremendously in your ability to make in the moment decisions as an actor.

Continue along this path until you begin to have fun with the thrill of not knowing what will/should/might happen.

Question: Do you feel I was a cohesive part of the cast?

Answer: Definitely! You were one of the anchors. You bring a great deal to the table. As you become more comfortable with the "you" that can NEVER be perfect, and you allow that "you" to lead rather than follow, you will expand in ALL your abilities.

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APENDIX

